

April, 2003

Dear Reader,

Thank you for your interest in the Loomis NRCA Management Plan. During the past year and a half, DNR has worked with a diverse group of people interested in the Loomis Forest to develop a management plan for the Loomis NRCA. The Notice of Final Determination (closes the SEPA environmental review process) was signed on April 10, 2003. Changes made to the plan based on public comment are included in the Notice of Final Determination. The Loomis NRCA Management Plan will be presented to the Commissioner of Public Lands for his approval and signature. A summary of comments and responses from the SEPA comment period are also available.

Work on the planning process for the Loomis NRCA began in the spring of 2001. The public process began in September 2001 with an open house in Tonasket. The NRCA planning process was one of five planning projects introduced at the open house. A coordinated planning process was designed to serve all five of the planning projects. To date, six public workshops have been held (approximately every 3-4 months) and at each workshop the public has had an opportunity to receive information about and make comments on, each of the projects, including the Loomis NRCA.

In addition to the public workshops, DNR staff were available to meet with individuals and special interest groups individually. Most of these meetings occurred during the fall of 2001 through early Fall of 2002. DNR staff met with representatives of groups (including site visits), public meetings, phone calls and attended group meetings. Meetings were held with the following groups, organizations and agencies:

- Backcountry Horsemen, Okanogan Chapter
- British Columbia Parks
- Butte Buster Snowmobile Club
- Cattlemen Association
- Colville Confederated Tribes
- Friends of the Loomis Forest
- Kettle Range Conservation Group
- Loomis Forest Action Committee
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Northwest Ecosystem Alliance
- Okanogan County Citizens Coalition
- Okanogan County Commissioners
- Okanogan County Snowmobile Advisory Board
- Okanogan Resource Council
- Okanogan Public Utility District
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- White Stone Irrigation District
- US Forest Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Yakama Indian Nation

The following is a general chronology of the establishment of the Loomis NRCA and the plan development process.

1998	Settlement Agreement identified two parcels for potential transfer from trust status. A First Memorandum of Clarification was signed at the end of the year and provided specific requirements concerning the designation and management of the parcels.
January 2000	Two parcels were transferred from trust status and designated as a conservation area. They are now called the Loomis NRCA.
April 2001 – August 2001	Internal pre-planning work.
Sept. 2001 – June 2002	Information gathering and preliminary development of the Loomis NRCA Fire Suppression Plan. Held four public workshops and several meetings with individual groups.
July 2002 – Nov. 2002	Development of the Loomis NRCA Management Plan. In November, the draft plan was made available for four weeks for public review and comment. Held the fifth public workshop and met with individual groups.
Dec. 2002 – Jan. 2002	Incorporated comments from the public and prepared the draft plan for the formal SEPA environmental review.
Jan. 22 – Feb 28, 2003	Formal comment period and public review of the draft plan. Held the sixth public workshop and solicited comments on the draft plan.
March 2003 – present	Reviewed public comments, documented responses and submitted a final draft plan to the SEPA Responsible Official for a final determination.

In May, the Loomis NRCA Management Plan will be presented to the Commissioner of Public Lands for his approval and signature.

If you have any questions or would like a hard copy sent to you, please call Andrew Stenbeck at (509) 685-2709 or Brooke Derr at (360) 902-1287.

Sincerely,

Washington DNR Northeast Region and Natural Areas Program